As and when information is received about patent being obtained on certain items which are not considered patentable and which affect Indian interests, steps are taken to assess whether the grant of such patent can be challenged under the patent laws of the country concerned. Earlier a patent granted in the United States of America on he use of turmeric in wound healing was successfully challenged and was also cancalled by the Patent Office of the country concerned. Similarly, a patent on the fungicidal property of Neem, granted in Europe, was successfully challgend. The claims of the patent on Basmati Ricelines and grains granted in the United States of America which had the potential of affecting India's commercial interest were also challenged. The said claims were subsiquently cancelled by the United States Patent and Trademark Office and the title of the patent was also amended.

In order to provide better protection to goods bearing geographical indications, the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 was enacted. This law provides for protection through registration of geographical indications. The registration of a geographical indication shall, if valid, give to the authorized user the exclusive right to the use of the geographical indication in relation to the goods in respect of which the geographical indication is registered. It also gives the registered proprietor and the authorized user the right to obtain relief in respect of infringement of the geographical indication. The Act was brought into force with effect from 15th September, 2003. This being a new legislation, steps have been taken to organize awareness programmes throughout India in a phased manner, and thereby to promote registration of Indian geographical indications. Fiften sensitization workshops were conducted during 2003-04 and 2004-05. As a result of these intiatives, the Geographical Indications Registry has been able to receive 46 applications for registration of geographical indications upto 31st December 2005, out of which 27 have already been regsitered. The registered goods bearing geographical indications, *inter alia*, include Darjeeling tea, Chanderi Sari, Pochampalli Ikat, Kota Doria, Kangra Tea, Coorg Orange, Channapatna toys and dolls, Nanjanagud Banana, Mysore Agarbathi, etc.

Border trade with Myanmar

†874. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that border trade is being carried out between More Nagar, Manipur and Myanmar;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether it is a fact that statistics show a declining trend of this trade and the trade has become almost negligible; and

(c) whether Government have conducted any study about this decline and taken any steps to solve this issue after ascertaining to reasons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Moreh in Manipur is an approved Land Customs Station for border trading between India and Myanmar.

(b) Bilateral trade with Myanmar from Land Customs Station at Moreh has shown some decline last year.

(c) Border trade allows exchange of locally produced commodities by people living along both sides of the Indo-Myanmar border. The variation in border trade takes place *inter alia* due to the availability of the locally produced commodities and also depends on the needs of the people living along the border.

Rules for single brand retailing

†875. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether after the grant of permission for independent single brand retailing to foreigners by Government, any rules have been formulated to implement the same;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that any brand of item can be sold in the market on retail basis after the approval of Government; and

(d) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Government has allowed Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) up to 51%, with prior

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.